

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A computer system, comprising:  
2 a CPU; and  
3 a programmable read only memory ("ROM") coupled to said CPU, said ROM containing a  
4 digital image;  
5 wherein said CPU programs its ROM during system initialization.
2. The system of claim 1 including a connection to a network and wherein, during  
initialization, said system sends a message to a server coupled to the network to determine whether  
an upgraded image is available for said ROM.
3. The system of claim 2 wherein, during initialization, said system receives an upgraded  
image and flashes said ROM with the upgraded image.
- 1 4. The system of claim 2 wherein said system receives the upgraded image from said server.
- 1 5. The system of claim 2 wherein said system receives a link to another server which provides  
2 the upgraded image.
- 1 6. The system of claim 2 wherein said message includes an indication of the version of the  
2 ROM's current image.

1 7. The system of claim 2 wherein said message includes an indication of the class of the  
2 ROM.

1 8. The system of claim 2 wherein said message includes an encryption key to be used to help  
2 assure the authenticity of the image.

1 9. A method of upgrading an image on a ROM, comprising:

- 2 (a) performing initialization of a system containing the ROM; and  
3 (b) while performing said initialization, transmitting a message to a server to determine  
4 whether an upgraded image exists for the ROM.

1 10. The method of claim 9 further including, during initialization, receiving an upgraded image  
2 and flashing the ROM.

1 11. The method of claim 9 further including, during initialization, receiving the upgraded  
2 image form said server.

1 12. The method of claim 9 further including, during initialization, receiving a link from said  
2 server, said link pointing to another server that contains said upgraded image.

1 13. The method of claim 9 wherein said message includes an indication of the version of the  
2 ROM's current image.

1 14. The method of claim 9 wherein said message includes an encryption key to be used to help  
2 assure the authenticity of the image.

1 15. The method of claim 9 wherein said message includes an indication of the class of the  
2 ROM.

1 16. A ROM image system, comprising:  
2 a server; and  
3 a database accessible by said server, said database storing information regarding ROM  
4 images;  
5 wherein said server receives a message from a computer to determine if an upgrade exists  
6 for the computer's ROM image, uses said information to determine if an upgrade is  
7 available for the computer's ROM image and transmits a message to the computer  
8 indicating whether an upgrade is available.

1 17. The system of claim 16 wherein said response includes an upgraded ROM image.

1 18. The system of claim 16 wherein said response includes a pointer to where an upgraded  
2 image is located.

1 19. The system of claim 18 wherein said pointer includes a URL.

1 20. The system of claim 18 wherein said pointer includes an IP address.

- 1 21. A method of providing ROM image updates, comprising:
- 2 (a) receiving a request for a ROM image update;
- 3 (b) determining whether a ROM image update exists;
- 4 (c) transmitting a response indicating whether a ROM image update exists.
- 1 22. The method of claim 21 wherein (c) includes transmitting an upgraded ROM image.
- 1 23. The method of claim 21 wherein (c) includes transmitting a link to where an upgraded  
2 ROM image can be found.
- 1 24. The method of claim 23 wherein the link includes a URL.
- 1 25. The method of claim 23 wherein the link includes an IP address.
- 1 26. The method of claim 21 wherein (c) includes transmitting information describing a  
2 problem the update solves.
- 1 27. An enterprise computing system, comprising:
- 2 a plurality of computers, each having a programmable ROM;
- 3 a proxy enterprise ROM server to which the computers couple, said proxy enterprise ROM  
4 server communicating with a network external to the enterprise;

